Senior Living in 2018: How Experience is Driving Today's Design Trends







The Critical Trend in Today's Senior Living Design

Design trends come and go, along with paint colors, construction materials and the latest and greatest in new technology. But there's a common theme among today's senior housing designs that has the power to stand the test of time: creating an experience.

This experience not only applies to those who live in the community, but also those who work in it, visit it and partner with it.

"It goes beyond the physical elements to include the cumulative whole that leaves someone with a feeling and really creates the sense of an experience," says Kristy Yang, senior interior designer for Milwaukee, Wisc.-based Direct Supply Aptura. "It's creating this experience for people when they enter the community whether staff, residents or their family."

Experiential design spans four critical areas:



This white paper will discuss how today's senior living designers are creating communities that thrive in these four key areas, and how all aspects of the design process are taking the intended experience into account.







A community's identity gives it a sense of place, from dining to technology and interiors. It can also serve as a competitive advantage and a selling point, as communities with strong identities tend to create a lasting memory and experience for residents, visitors and staff. Today's design trends are creating identity in several ways.

From the planning stage, it's important to pinpoint the greater community's identity by touring the market. Ask questions like:

- Where do people in the surrounding community eat?
- Where do they shop?
- What are the community amenities?
- Where do people work?
- Is there a large military presence or a major employer in the area?





Designers are then creating an environment that feels like home based on these findings. Consider that residents will seek familiarity, but may not want an environment that is so extravagant that it feels over the top.

"You can infuse local elements in simple ways like local photography or artwork," Yang says. "Make a connection with a popular restaurant and hire the chef. Look to things that set the standard ahead of the competition."



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KRISTY YANG

Senior Interior Designer, Direct Supply Aptura

Ways to create community identity



Offer dining menus that highlight local ingredients and cuisine



Use technology to foster connections between residents and the surrounding community



Incorporate local elements such as the work of local artists



Honor the history of the location through art, historic photographs and other historic elements



Partner with a local restaurant or bakery for supplies or and local specialties, such as freshly baked bread or dry goods for the bistro







Staffing is the top challenge for senior living providers today, with the senior housing and care industry projected to require 1.2 million additional

workers by the year 2025, according to industry association Argentum. Some new communities are reporting that staffing is even more challenging than finding residents. Experiential design can play a role in alleviating some of the pain points associated with hiring and retaining workers. It does this by creating communities that appeal to the senses, focusing on technology that eases work, and may even target specific aspects to attract younger members of the workforce that can be so challenging to retain.

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JAMES JANSEN

Product Manager, Technology Solutions, **Direct Supply Aptura**

"Staff are requesting better and easier ways to work. That means incorporating something in their hands or on their lanyards that is going to help them do their jobs most efficiently," says James Jansen, Product Manager of technology solutions. "Communities are using technology to make themselves more marketable to get and retain talent."





Designers are making room for TV display boards in staff spaces to help keep them informed, and they are implementing solutions such as electronic health records to streamline charting and communications regarding resident health information. Wi-Fi is a crucial component of today's technology solutions, particularly for millennials who are known for staying connected via mobile devices.

"The coverage needs to be everywhere in the building," says Patrick Mahoney, Aptura technology designer. "It's not enough to have it in key areas. Communities are going with

higher-grade Wi-Fi, the fastest grade. We are doing heat maps to show full availability in the building."

Those planning communities are also taking a close look at staff-specific spaces to ensure there are plenty of charging stations so employees can charge their mobile devices; that in dining services back-of-house and frontof-house spaces are blended to enable more interaction between staff and residents; and even that the community simply smells good with the use of neutralizing materials and aromatherapy—a benefit to all who spend time within the community walls.

Technology to improve the staff experience

Bundled technology solutions to cut costs, reduce paper and streamline workflow

Equipment to collect data from patient monitoring devices and populate EHRs

Single devices such as badges or fobs, that carry staff credentials enabling them to access doors, order food, activate fitness equipment and more.

Physical therapy technology to ensure exercises are completed properly







Partnerships are important not only to the success of the community, but also to the lifestyle of the residents. Flexible spaces created across the community are essential to fostering and developing partnerships such as those forged with community members, civic groups and others.

Senior living design in 2018 is preparing for these partnerships from the planning stages to the interior design, whether the partners are hospitals, physicians, local clubs, guest speakers, food trucks, chefs or others—finding that partners improve referrals, operating income, sales, marketing and even staffing needs.

"We are creating spaces that are attractive to civic groups, performers and events like wedding receptions, graduation parties and baby showers so they can be hosted within the community," Yang says.

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In an effort to create an experience that allows partners to thrive, large ambiguous spaces are making way for more defined spaces—even if they are multi-purpose such as a space that transitions from a bistro by day to a wine bar by night.

In food service, exhibition kitchens and action stations remain popular as a means to host guest chefs with mirrors and cameras placed for improved active or remote viewing. Mobile devices are also enabling family members to order food from the community bistro for pick-up or dine-in, encouraging them to share a meal and visit during dinner or lunchtime.

Creating a space where partners can thrive

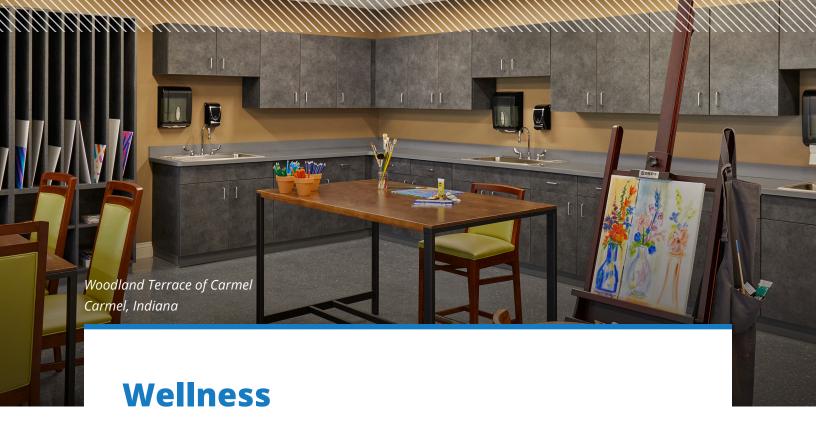
Consider the types of partners that will be drawn to your senior living community:

- Hospitals and health care systems
- Local artists, creative groups and performing groups
- Schools including elementary-age and colleges
- Restaurants and other local food producers









Wellness spans so much more than physical well being in today's senior housing communities. Today's senior living residents demand a holistic approach to wellness that incorporates spiritual well being, emotional well being, physical fitness, vocational success, intellectual stimulation and more.

Much of the wellness approach connects with technology on some level, Mahoney says, and critically, every community must be prepared for the technology that comes along with residents and their family members toward fostering wellness.

"When family member come to visit, they bring devices with them and expect them to be able to function," he says. "Then there is technology "When family member come to visit, they bring devices with them and expect them to be able to function."

PATRICK MAHONEY

Technology Designer, Direct Supply Aptura

that is actually in the room and connects with the resident to not only help staff and physicians, but it helps them stay connected to family, friends and what's happening."





Wellness may also be supported through design in the types of spaces that are being created for residents.

"One of the top things I am seeing in 2018 is the creation of wellness spaces," says Erin Berry, senior lead interior designer for Aptura. "It may be things like Pilates rooms and yoga studios...or bringing more of the outdoors inside."

Experiential design and the future of senior living

As the senior housing population shifts away from the silent generation and toward baby boomers, residents will be more demanding when it comes to technology, food service and their surroundings. But above all, they will be expecting a memorable experience across all facets of life, as will their family and friends, and the staff who serve them.

Design elements that are driving wellness in 2018

- Music studios, classrooms, libraries, green houses and technology center
- Chapels and other spiritual spaces
- Video and voice connectivity devices
- Digital video memory screens that prompt fond ideas of the past
- Camera technology that allows residents to see what's going on in another part of the community
- Physical therapy spaces

From wellness to partnerships, community identity and staffing, experiential design the experience is redefining senior living communities.





Direct Supply Aptura maximizes the profit potential of our clients' real estate investments through an unparalleled Planning, Design, Procurement, and Construction approach.

Our mission is to improve the homes and lives of seniors and those who care for them.

For project needs or consultation on trends in Senior Living connect with our experts at 1-844-4-APTURA.



